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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/07/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [PTER](#) [TS](#)
SUBJECT: TWO TUNISIAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS CHARGED WITH
PLANNING AN ATTACK ON US MILITARY OFFICERS

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F.Godec for reasons (1.4) (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) Several news agencies (Reuters, AP, medialine.org) reported July 5 and 6 that nine Tunisians, including two Air Force officers were charged with planning an attack against US military personnel.

[1](#)2. (U) According to the reports, the nine individuals appeared before an investigative judge in Tunis on Saturday July 6. The two officers, Air Force Lieutenants stationed at the Bizerte air base, were charged under the 2003 Terrorism Law specifically with: "incitement to terrorism crimes; attempting to provide a terrorist group with arms and explosives; and use of Tunisian territory for recruiting individuals to a terrorist group." Further proceedings against them were postponed for a week at the request of the defense. The seven other individuals, all soldiers, were released without a hearing. The defense lawyer for the group, Samir Ben Amor told the media that the officers had denied the charges and said they had been tortured. He claimed that the State did not have any evidence against the officers.

[1](#)3. (S) Embassy officers have contacted the MFA, MOD and MOI requesting clarification of the news reports. The Ambassador will meet the Minister of Defense on Friday and will raise the reports and request information. A/Pol Counselor also talked directly to Ben Amor who was very cautious over the phone and only added that the individuals had been arrested three weeks ago. We will also seek a meeting with Ben Amor to see if he is more forthcoming in person.

[1](#)4. (S) Comment: The Embassy will continue to press the GOT for information on this case. As happened with the 2006/2007 Soliman group, however, the GOT may never provide details. Indeed, it appears the GOT has been caught off guard by the widespread publicity the case has received. We recommend that the Department also request information via Tunisian Ambassador Mansour.
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